SIX YEARS IN THE WILDS OF CENTRAL AFRICA.

By E. J. Glave, One of Stanley's Pioneer Officers.

Third Paper.

My presence and the work I was doing attracted visitors from villages for miles around Lukolela. The station was crowded all day with strangers who came to investigate everything, ask innumerable questions, and impede the work in progress by examining tools and workmanship until their curiosity regarding them was satisfied. To avoid the wearying task of incessantly answering the simple yet puzzling questions of childlike ignorance, and to escape from all the noise and tumult of strange voices round my house, I would plunge into the forest which covered all the country to the south of my station. My little servant Mabruki was my only companion on these occasions; he would follow close at my heels, carrying my cartridge-belt slung across his shoulder.

I always carried a gun with me on these excursions, as birds and small game were very plentiful, and a brace or two of pigeons or guinea-fowl would often repay my forest tramp.

But the great forest itself, with its undisturbed solitudes and its dim green recesses, always brought such relief and quiet restfulness to me, when wearied and fagged in mind and body, that I needed no excuse for my aimless wanderings. All sounds of voices or work died away, and we left all traces of human life on the verge of the woods. We had to make our way as best we could, pushing aside or cutting away the tangled mass of brushwood undergrowth that spread thickly round the roots of the lofty trees of teak and mahogany; and overhead luxuriant creepers trailed from branch to branch, or hung in great bunches from the topmost boughs, almost shutting out the light of day and the blue noonday sky.

As we forced our way still deeper into the heart of the forest, the gloom and stillness increased, and we crossed many a hidden glade known only to the hunter, where the deathlike silence was unbroken save for the cry of savage beast or call of passing bird.

These woods abounded in all kinds of game. Here the elephant had made a path for himself, uprooting and flinging to the ground the tree that barred his way, plowing through matted undergrowth, snapping vine and twig, and crushing down the slender spear-grass beneath his ponderous foot, leaving behind him a broad trail of wrecked tree and shrub. Numberless herds of buffalo, filing down to the river for their morning drink, had worn deeply furrowed tracks in the loamy soil; and the broken ground beneath the spreading wild-plum tree told of the frequent visits of the bush-pig in search of fallen fruits. Here and there we could discover faint imprints made by the stealthy leopard, or the delicate impression of the antelope's hoof.

Troops of monkeys of all sizes set the tree-tops swinging as they scrambled from bough to bough, searching through the wood for the acid "*litobé*" (fruit of the india-rubber vine).

The African deems roast monkey a delicacy, and keen observation of the habits of animals has taught the native hunter many curious devices in traps and lures. A hole in a tree near some spot frequented by these animals is found, and a noose is cunningly concealed with small branches so as to encircle the mouth of the cavity; a cord attached to this noose leads down to the place that the hunter has selected as a hiding-place; some palm-nuts or other fruits are then placed in the hole; and when the monkey, in order to obtain them, thrusts in an arm, the cord is pulled, and the animal is held firmly by the noose until dispatched by spear or arrow. The monkey is gifted with a degree of intelligence which the word instinct hardly expresses. The trap into which he is enticed must be very artfully constructed, and the bait of the most inviting kind, before he is successfully deceived.

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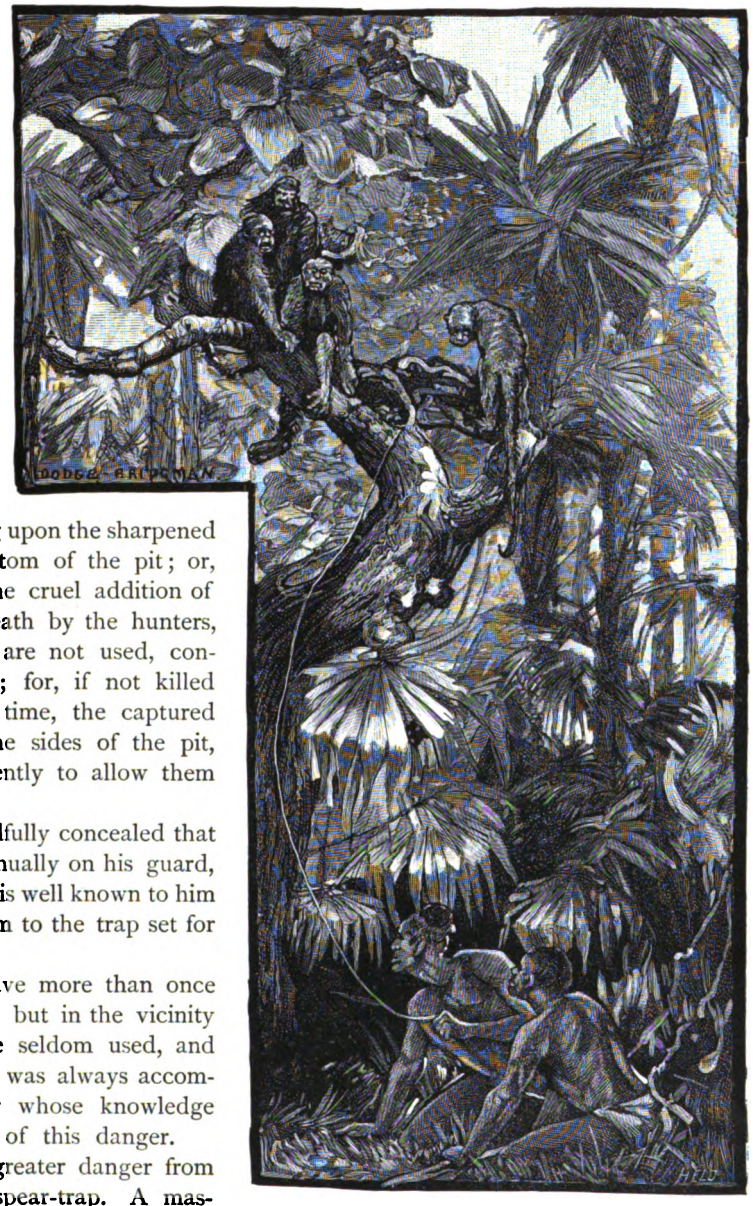
Another favorite mode of hunting monkeys is this: A crowd of natives surrounds a troop of these animals on three sides, and then, with sticks and stones, drives them until they arrive at the edge of the forest, when the poor, frightened creatures, in endeavoring to escape from their pursuers, jump to the ground, where they are stabbed before they can get away.

The buffalo, hippopotamus, and elephant are not safe from the snare of the African hunter. Pitfalls are dug, twenty feet deep, and covered so cunningly with small sticks and leaves that the rogue-elephant, or wandering buffalo, roaming through the forest, breaks through the fragile covering, and falls headlong upon the sharpened stakes driven into the bottom of the pit; or, when the trap is without the cruel addition of spikes, he is speared to death by the hunters, who must, if such spikes are not used, continually visit their pitfalls; for, if not killed and if left any length of time, the captured animals will tear down the sides of the pit, and fill up the hole sufficiently to allow them to escape.

These pitfalls are so skillfully concealed that the hunter has to be continually on his guard, as unless their whereabouts is well known to him he may possibly fall a victim to the trap set for the game he is stalking.

I myself, when alone, have more than once stumbled into these holes; but in the vicinity of a settlement spikes are seldom used, and when venturing far afield, I was always accompanied by a local hunter whose knowledge enabled us to steer clear of this danger.

Big game are in even greater danger from the deadly "*likongo*" or spear-trap. A massive barbed spear-head is let into a heavy beam of wood, and this weapon is suspended thirty or forty feet from the ground over some well-worn animal trail. Tied between two trees, its deadly blade pointing directly to the trail, it is kept in position by a cord which is carried to the base of the tree, and then, concealed among branches of trees, is drawn across the path. The unwary elephant, buffalo, or hippopotamus severs the frail string and releases the ponderous weapon, which falls crashing into the poor brute's back. As a rule an animal wounded in this way is unable to move far, as the distance through



AN AFRICAN MONKEY-TRAP.

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which the heavily weighted spear falls, drives the barb deep into the body.

When an animal is killed, the meat is cut up, placed over fires, and smoked until it is dry, in which condition it will keep for several months, so long as it is not allowed to become damp.

ELEPHANTS APPROACHING A SPEAR-TRAP.

The natives' ordinary list of food is very limited, the staple being boiled manioc root and fish. Manioc is a vegetable resembling the potato in substance, but coarse and stringy. The African prepares it by soaking it in water for five days, during which it ferments, becoming soft and pulpy; the fibrous threads are then extracted, and it is kneaded into a dough-like paste, which is boiled before use. In the Congo household, this is called *binguelé*, or *chiquanga*, and is a very nutritious food.

Some dishes, though appreciated by the native, are obtained with so much difficulty that they must be considered as luxuries. It is not every day that even the greatest chiefs can partake of boiled hippopotamus-leg, roast elephant-trunk, or grilled buffalo-steak. The dishes I have named will not, perhaps, seem very palatable; but it would be easy to name others much less appetizing to the taste of Europeans. The African eats three times a day: at nine o'clock, lightly, and at noon and six in the evening as largely as the state of his larder will permit. Vegetables are invariably boiled, but meat is roasted on spits, over a wood fire.

Knives, forks, spoons, napkins, and plates are not necessaries at a "Congo dinner." In fact, any native who has been fortunate enough to obtain those luxuries, a fork and spoon, punches a hole in the handle of each, and hangs them by a string from the roof-tree of his house, as proofs of his importance, and of the advance of civilization. Manioc, fish, and meat, when cooked, are cut up and placed in large earthen jars by the women, who cook and prepare all food. Then groups of ten and twelve squat down round a jar and eat with their fingers from the common dish, sopping up the peppered palm-oil gravy with their *chiquanga*, or manioc bread.

The civilized wielder of a fork and spoon would be sadly handicapped at a Central African banquet.

The Congo man does not always limit himself to three meals a day; he is a glutton by nature. When he has a quantity of meat he gorges while the savory morsels last. Even if the meat is tainted and the odor of it is so strong as almost to overpower the passer-by, it is not rejected on that account; and any disgust I ever expressed on seeing the natives eat hippopotamus-meat, the odor of which would have been intolerable to a European, was met by the retort: "*Bisu ku-ola niama, tu-kuola ncholu té!*" (We eat the meat, but we don't eat the smell!)—a subtle distinction.

My rather monotonous routine of life was repeatedly relieved by some unusual activity in the villages.

One day, amid the heavy booming of drums and the hubbub of a hundred excited voices all

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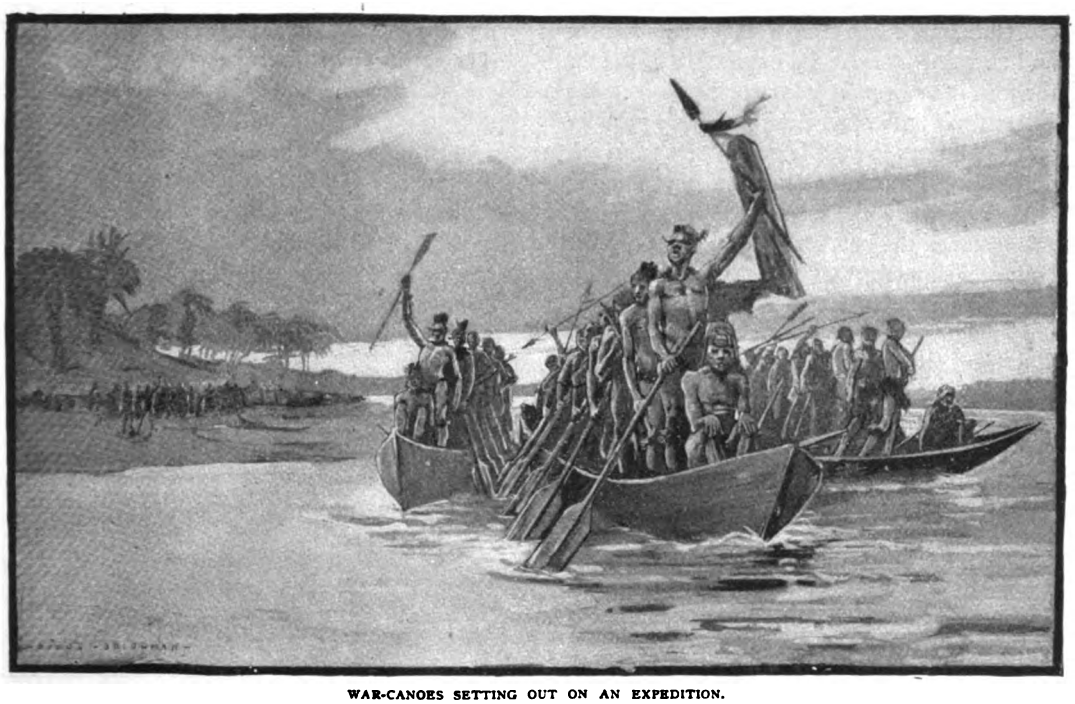
talking at a time, and each one trying to make itself heard above the general tumult, a large fleet of war-canoes started away, manned by natives of Lukolela and the district. They were about to punish the common enemy, a tribe on the other side of the river, for some cause real or imaginary. As the flotilla passed my Station beach, they struck up their boastful war-songs, rattled their drums and bells, and exhibited, for my edification, all the accomplishments which they intended to bring to bear on the enemy.

Their faces smeared with charcoal gave the natives a truly formidable appearance, as they flourished their bright-bladed knives and keen, glistening spears, in fierce anticipation of the planned attack.



WAR-CANOES SETTING OUT ON AN EXPEDITION.

Three days afterward, the flotilla returned. As they paddled slowly past my station, their dejected and crestfallen demeanor plainly showed that their common enemy still remained unpunished. The blackened faces and glistening weapons had failed to frighten the enemy. The arrival of the canoes at the village landing was the signal for a general wailing, as one of the young Lukolela chiefs had been killed. The next day I witnessed the burial. The body, round which lengths of cloth were wrapped, resembled a colossal chrysalis. Since the return of the canoes, guns had been repeatedly discharged to announce the death; but at the moment when the body of the young chief was lowered into the grave dug for its reception in the chief's own house, the reports of the old flint-locks culminated in a veritable salvo of musketry.

The usual accompaniment to such ceremonies, in the Lukolela district, is a strange mixture of mirth and sorrow, for little clusters of merry dancers mingle with the groups of mourners whose energetic lamentation is shown by streaming eyes and the tear-stained cheeks. But little real grief is felt, however; the tear is a tribute demanded by native custom, which sorrow, unaided, can seldom produce. A woman will suddenly cease her weeping, throwing aside all signs of woe, to enjoy a pipe or perhaps to sell a bunch of bananas or a fowl; but upon the completion of the bargain she will again step back into the circle of mourners and abruptly resume her moans and tears, and, with complete command of the emotions, will weep or laugh at will. Sometimes, at the death of an important chief,

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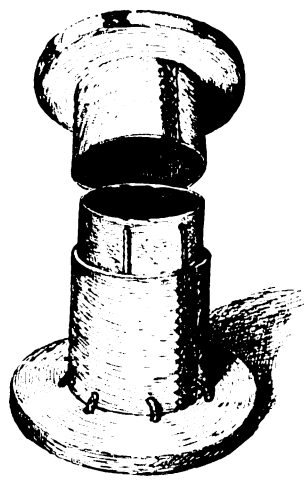
all the women will be engaged for days in shedding tears over the departed. During the time of mourning, native custom denies them the privilege of washing, and the continual streams from their eyes wear deep ruts on their begrimed faces and bodies. When the body has been placed in the grave, the friends of the dead chief dry their tears and resume their ordinary habits of dress and demeanor; but the slaves and relatives of the dead man must for three months after the interment still maintain an appearance of great dejection, and refrain from smearing the body with the customary red powder, or even from removing the objectionable eyelashes or trimming the nails. They must also wear very old cloth, and leave their woolly heads unplaited and uncared-for. At the expiration of the three months, the *ngula* (red wood-powder) again colors their bodies, new costumes are produced, and the unkempt wool is neatly plaited in wisps and tails. Too often the cessation of mourning is signalized by the execution of a slave. In this instance the brother of the young chief had bought a slave for that purpose. But I forbade the ceremony, and in order to protect the poor, unfortunate fellow from all harm, I redeemed him by paying to the captor the price of his purchase. The poor emaciated creature, whose name was Mpasa, had for six days been bound hand and foot by cords, with barely enough food to allow him to exist. It was a great disappointment to the expectant villagers that I would not allow the sacrifice to be carried out, as they had invited a troupe of Ekuala musicians, an inland tribe on the opposite bank of the river, to take part in their festivities. Having heard a great deal about the ability of the dusky orchestra, I invited them to visit my Station, and I was greatly struck with the harmony of sound produced from unpromising material. Some of the troupe rattled on their drums; others fingered rough string-instruments; and round pieces of flat iron, pierced and strung loosely together, formed excellent castanets. The music was wild, but performed in such excellent time that the result was decidedly pleasing. To the accompaniment of this Central African musical band, the Ekuala dancers, wearing wild-cat skins around their waists, gave an exhibition of their skill, which consisted in successions of rapid and graceful movements of the body. The majority of the villagers were slaves; their varied tattoo marks plainly proclaimed the widespread raids of the slaver. The Lolo, from the banks of the Ikelemba, Lulungu, and Malinga rivers; the Ngombé, from the far interior; and the natives of the Ubangi, were all represented in the ranks of the Lukolela households — women as wives, and the men as recruits to the number of warriors. The slave, having survived misery, starvation, and the many murderous phases of the slave-trade, finds himself at a village like Lukolela in a position of comparative security, until some horrible native custom, or the superstitious edict of the Fetishman, demands his death.

The tastes of Congo tribes vary considerably. Here at Lukolela the general ambition of the headmen was to own as many slaves as possible, so that they might insult their neighbors with impunity and destroy those who resented it. Besides this ambitious desire, they have a great love of metal ornaments. The Lukolela chief points with a great deal of pride to his brass anklets, and will boast of the massive *molua* (woman's large brass neck-ring) round his wife's neck. The Ba-Teke, of Stanley Pool, engage largely in the ivory trade, buying from the up-river native traders, and exchange their tusks with the white merchants on the coast for cloth, guns, and powder.



AN AFRICAN TRUNK.

The merchant, becoming a man of property, will wear a little of the cloth, from the store he has accumulated during his lifetime, tied round his waist, with one end dragging in the mud three yards behind him, to exemplify to his admiring neighbors his intense contempt for such paltry wealth. The bulk of his cloth is stored to satisfy his craving for a pompous funeral, and at his death it will be bound around

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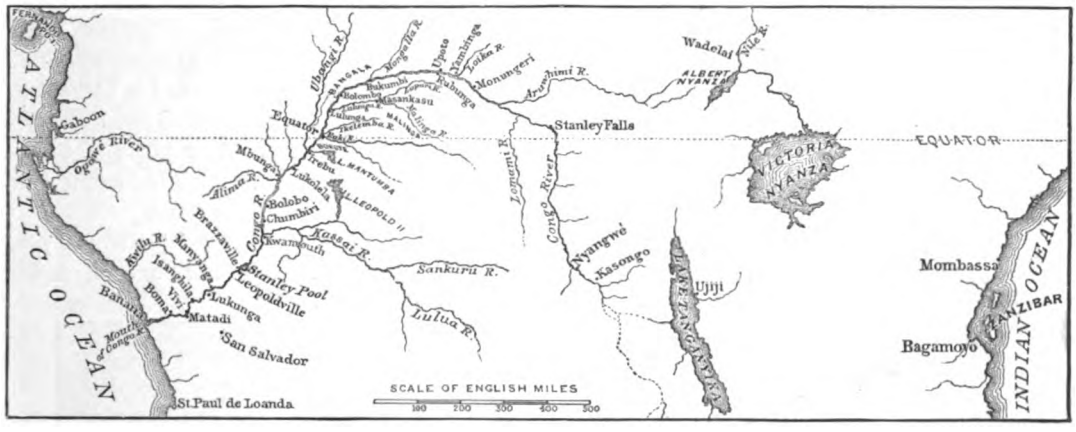
him preparatory to his being smoked before burial, and the powder and guns of the departed will be used in firing salutes suitable to such an important occasion.

My own favorite recreation was the chase, worked through the different well-known hunting patches, when, passing through a little stretch of long grass, a small black-and-white bird, which always accompanies buffalo herds, flew up just in front of me. Instinctively arresting my foot-



OUTLINE MAP OF EQUATORIAL AFRICA, SHOWING THE PRINCIPAL STATIONS ALONG THE CONGO.

which always delighted me; but we were now in the midst of the season of winds, when the river is very dangerous, as tornadoes were constantly sweeping across the stream, lashing into fury the quiet waters of a few minutes before, rendering the crossing of the Congo in a native canoe a hazardous undertaking.

As one of the steel lighters, which could face any weather, had arrived at my place on its way up-river with fresh supplies, I borrowed the use of this boat in order to cross the river and have a day's hunting. Upon arriving on the other side, we passed through a small channel and entered a large lake-like lagoon in the midst of an extensive plain. We had a favorable wind, and had not put out an oar. The rough square-sail bellied out before us as we tore through the water. Upon a little tongue of sand, two buffaloes were taking their morning drink, and so noiselessly had our bark sped on its way, that the animals were evidently unconscious of our presence until the report of my long Martini rifle brought one to the ground and warned the other of his danger. When I ran my boat in-shore, I found the one I had shot to be quite dead, the ball having passed behind the shoulder through to the heart. Leaving some of the crew in charge of the boat, I struck into the grass in search of other game. We had steps, I strained forward and, peering in the direction whence the bird arose, saw at my feet a big bull-buffalo lying in the grass, with his head toward me. Quick as thought, I raised my rifle and fired a snap shot; fortunately for myself and trackers, the bullet took instant effect, and after two or three spasmodic efforts to scramble to his feet, the buffalo sank back dead on the grass. I shudder to think what the result might have been had I only wounded him. I could never understand the bull's presence there, for it is not often that buffaloes are caught napping in that way. Having skinned the animal, my men carried the meat to the boat. They were walking just ahead of me, when suddenly I saw each man throw down his load and start back with a terrible fright. The cry of "*Mosémé! Mosémé!*" (Snake! Snake!) explained the situation. Approaching, I saw coiled around a small tree, with head defiantly erect, a large python. The reptile had gorged itself, and did not seem to be capable of any great activity. I shot it through the head, and my men carried it to the boat. Its skin subsequently made a handsome trophy.

The report of my rifle, when I fired at the snake, had started a small herd of buffalo. I heard them galloping through the swamp ahead of us. Taking my hunter, Bongo Nsanda, with

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me, I got within shot, fired and hit one of the herd; and, not bringing the animal down, I had to follow the tracks through swamp and plain, and push my way through tangled grass and into the depths of the boggy forest, before I came up to my game. The poor wounded brute was standing in a pool of water, and he allowed me to approach unobserved and bowl him over.

In all my hunts I was accompanied by Bongo Nsanda, who stood ready at hand, and often with his heavy spear, which he preferred to a rifle, he gave the *coup-de-grâce*, and ended the dying struggle of the animal that I had shot.

Hippopotami, when guarding their young, are excessively spiteful, and attack the natives' canoes, very often upsetting them and killing the occupants. "*Ngubu mbi akujala ìsi ùna*" (There is a very bad hippopotamus on the other side of the river), said Bongo Nsanda to me. Then he told me that early that morning a fisherman, while in his canoe attending to his nets, was chased by this animal. The frightened fisherman paddled with all his might to avoid his fierce pursuer, and had just touched the bank with the nose of his canoe when the furious old hippo, with his great bony jaws, seized the stern of the frail canoe with a terrible crunch. Fortunately, the fisherman kept his balance, and was shot out of his canoe a distance of several feet and landed high and dry on the bank. The hippo, baffled in his attempt to overtake the native, smashed and trampled to pieces the little dug-out, as if to show the trembling native, who had sought shelter in a tree-top, the kind of treatment he would have received if good fortune had not befriended him. This piece of information was held out to me as an inducement to rid mankind of so formidable a foe.

"*Yo ku-buma ye te*, Makula?" (Won't you kill him, Makula?) asked Bongo Nsanda, using my native name. I felt now, with my experience, I could safely pit my Martini rifle against any hippo on the river, no matter how terrible his reputation might be. So I crossed the river in my large canoe, fearing to use my small one, lest the ill-conditioned old fellow might pitch me in the air, and perhaps select a locality which had not the advantage of presenting soft sand or grass on which to break my fall. Besides, in case he should charge, I

SHOOTING A PYTHON. (SEE PAGE 653.)

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"THE FISHERMAN WAS SHOT OUT OF HIS CANOE A DISTANCE OF SEVERAL FEET."

felt sure that my present canoe would stand sound and steady.

When I reached the other side, there was our enemy on guard over a little bay. I put my canoe in-shore, just below the creek where he was swimming with his head hardly above water; then, creeping silently along the edge of the grass, arrived in a position where I could get a good shot at him. I fired, and struck him in the head; my ball hit the skull where the bone was thickest, and only maddened the brute. He charged about in the shallow water near the bank, snorting, and churning up the muddy stream. Bongo Nsanda stood ready with his heavy, loaded spear, and as the hippo came forward endeavoring to find the hiding-place of the enemy who had wounded him, Bongo Nsanda hurled his spear in behind the brute's shoulder, the keen blade piercing the body to the heart. The fishermen, attracted by the gunshot, were delighted to see their old enemy killed, and a deep-drawn sigh of relief escaped from the fisherman who but the day before had been compelled by the hippopotamus to make such an undignified landing from his canoe.

Bongo Nsanda was a renowned hunter and trapper. He had caught a great many hippopotami in his pitfall-traps, and many a "tusker" and buffalo had become victims to his weighted spear, cunningly suspended from the branches of the towering forest trees. Passing through a wood one day, following up the new track of a buffalo, Bongo Nsanda called my attention to an old and unused pitfall which he had made, a few yards from the river bank, in the trail of a hippopotamus. Having left it unwatched for several days while he was on a trading trip, one morning, upon paying it a visit, he was much astonished to see that it was full. During his absence, a hippo had fallen in and died, and a crocodile, attracted by the scent, had climbed up the bank and got into the pit, where he gorged himself upon the hippo, and was unable to get out again, but was still alive. As a large trading-canoe was passing at the time, Bongo Nsanda thought it best to sell the contents of his trap as it stood, thereby saving himself the bother of killing the reptile. So he hailed the canoe, and, having made a satisfactory bargain, the purchasers proceeded to kill the crocodile by spearing it. One man, however, losing his footing, fell in, and was caught by the crocodile. Fortunately he was rescued alive, though severely wounded.

Bongo Nsanda, like all natives, was very superstitious, and thought this trap, which had

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been the cause of so much bloodshed, had better be left alone. He had a foreboding that he himself might in some way be the next victim if he used it again.

Rivalries and fights are by no means confined to human beings; the cries of the savage animals of African jungles engaged in deadly combat often break the silence of those wild regions. The unwieldy hippopotamus, strolling along a buffalo path, is charged unawares by one of those ill-tempered animals. The dispute culminates in a duel between the hippo's keen, gleaming tusks and the sharp-pointed horns of the buffalo bull.

The result of such an encounter depends usually upon the advantage given by the lay of the land to one of the combatants; as, should the buffalo have an unimpeded rush at his enemy, the hippo would receive such a blow as would render his ultimate dispatch a very easy matter. But should the slower moving but heavier hippopotamus have any opportunity to use his formidable tusks, the buffalo would have no chance at all. I remember hearing such an encounter; I did not actually witness the fray, but a visit to the scene of it after the battle was a sufficient proof that the fight had been fierce and protracted. The ground was broken and torn up in every direction; saplings, grass, and bushes were crushed and stamped into the muddy ground.

In the upper reaches of the Congo, when the wet season, or "*Mpila*," is prolonged, the river rises to a great height, flooding huge tracts of bush and plain, and compelling the different wild animals to assume for the time an amphibious nature, as they must swim from place to place in search of food.

BONGO NSANDA SPEARING THE HIPPOPOTAMUS.

During the continuance of such a season the natives are enabled to kill off a great many buffaloes. They will surround a small herd that happens to be swimming together. Then they throw long wooden poles in the water all around the animals to prevent their progress and exhaust them. A buffalo, under these conditions, is a very harmless creature, and easily approached and killed by the natives with their spears.

It is not unusual to see an elephant swimming across the river; and this monster is as helpless as any when away from terra firma. He has very little power when in deep water, as, to breathe, he must keep his trunk raised above

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the surface of the water, and is thus deprived of a formidable weapon.

Great strides had been made on the Congo since I first arrived, in '83. The natives of the wild regions of the Congo Basin, who had never seen a white man until '77, when Stanley passed through their country on his marvelous journey "Through the Dark Continent," having placed themselves under the protection of Stanley's expedition, "L'Association Internationale Africaine," had by treaties ceded their territory to this society. In 1885, this territory was recognized by all the civilized powers as *L'État Indépendant du Congo* (The Congo Free State).

In 1885 the Berlin Conference distinctly defined the limits of this new State, and this part of equatorial Africa was then exempt from European disputes. Better transport on the lower river was being organized, and, constantly, new steamers were being built and launched on the Upper Congo. The State had added "Le Stanley," a stern-wheeler seventy feet long, to their fleet, the Livingstone Inland Mission had built and floated their steamer the "Henry Reed," and, besides these, the Baptist Mission twin-screw steamer "Peace" was already navigating the river.

This increased service of boats greatly improved the means of communication between the Stations. Letters were now received every three or four months. Only those who have traveled far away from home and dear friends can understand the pleasure a letter gives to one surrounded by wild and ignorant people, with whom, no matter how friendly, he has no thought or feeling in common.

At times when one feels indeed isolated and cut off, the arrival of home letters puts him again in touch with the dear ones at home. If disappointed in receiving a mail, we try to account for the failure by gloomy suggestions, or think, Why have I not received a letter? — perhaps because of severe illness or even death! A steamer will sometimes arrive without letters. Intense is the suspense of a disappointed man, until the next arrival of a steamer. Friends are utterly unable to imagine the amount of pleasure they convey to the wanderer in distant climes by a thoughtful little note of kindness from home. The postal service, in wild, far-away countries, is erratic and unreliable. Sometimes six months will elapse without an opportunity of sending letters up into the interior. But the little packet of letters is all the more heartily welcomed after months of anxious waiting.

For my own part I shall ever remember how, when I was deep in the heart of Africa, away from friends and countrymen, and with none of my own color within hundreds of miles of me, the home letter, with its messages of affectionate remembrance, refreshed me, and how the arrival of the tattered envelope, well worn and covered with strange postmarks, with its assurance that I was not forgotten, formed a bright event in my lonely travels.

My Station at Lukolela had been founded in order to secure rights to a certain territory by occupation of it, but now the limits of the Congo Free State and of French and Portuguese possessions in this part of Africa had been definitely settled, several posts founded for similar reasons were to be abandoned. It was a great blow for me to know that Lukolela was among the doomed. I received orders from headquarters that I was to proceed one hundred miles down-river to Bolobo, with my garrison and all its belongings. It was further intimated that a small steel boat would be placed at my disposal for the transportation. The natives of Lukolela and the surrounding country, with all of whom I was on the best of terms, gathered together and protested most strongly against my leaving them; they offered me all kinds of inducements to stay. Ivory, goats, sheep, fowls, bananas, were to be mine, *ad libitum*, if only I would remain. But although I regretted leaving a people who showed so many proofs of affection for me, the orders were imperative and therefore had to be obeyed.

We exchanged parting gifts. Iuka, Mungaba, Mpuké, Manjimba, all brought their goats and sheep, and Bongo Nsanda, the childish but courageous and faithful old hunter, who had many a time occupied a dangerous corner with me in the tangled grass or the dark jungles of the neighboring forest, gave me his long cherished spear as a keepsake.

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Our departure from Lukolela was as grotesque as it was sad. The natives crowded along the river bank, all with sorrowful countenances, and exchanged parting words with us as we dropped down-stream. The means I had at my disposal for the removal of my garrison were one steel whale-boat, twenty-five feet long, and one large dug-out canoe; and in these were to be conveyed twenty men, goats, sheep, fowls, ducks, furniture, my own belongings, and those of my men. We looked like an itinerant menagerie or troupe of tumblers. Men, tables, chairs, goats, ducks, boxes, mats, etc., were all mixed up so indescribably that the superstitious natives along the banks of the river above Bolobo fled in dismay as the tangled mass of men, animals, and freight piled into two small boats floated past their villages.

It required most careful management on the part of the men to get in and out among the animals and furniture. The flotilla was not one likely to command respect, but I was most heartily welcomed, when at last I arrived at my destination, by my old friend Lieutenant Liebrechts, a Belgian artillery officer, who was in command of Bolobo Station. I was right glad again to shake hands with Liebrechts; we were very old friends, having occupied the same quarters together at Leopoldville in 1883. What a change in this Station at Bolobo since I first saw it in 1883! There had been much trouble between whites and natives then, and the Station houses had been burned to the ground; even now the grounds were encircled by a high, stout palisade. Nice, well-kept houses and stores had been built. There were also flocks of goats and sheep, good poultry-yards full of fowls and ducks, and immense plantations of sweet potatoes, maize, and peanuts, and gardens of vegetables. What was more important still, the relations with the formerly unfriendly and hostile natives were now of a most satisfactory nature in every way.

The villagers of all the surrounding country were constantly visiting the Station and exchanging presents.

Markets had been re-established for the sale of food, pottery, and native produce, and long-standing feuds between the different tribes were amicably settled by the happy intervention of Liebrechts. It is such as he who are required to gain the confidence of the African savage, men with a keen sense of justice, and the will to enforce it. My life at Bolobo was a happy one. Liebrechts and I spent our time in visiting the different chiefs, superintending Station matters, and making little excursions into the interior in search of guinea-fowl, partridges, ducks, or the more formidable buffalo of the plain. I shall always remember with the greatest pleasure our strolls amidst the banana and palm-groves of these Central African villages, our more extended tramps through swamp and forest in search of the buffalo, and the pleasant chats we had over the sentry-fires of the Station.

At Bolobo, in former days, the buffalo used to come even into the Station. On one occasion there were three white men living there, and news was brought in that a herd of buffalo were just outside. They immediately equipped themselves for the chase and started out, following the tracker. They had gone about twenty yards only, when they could see the herd two hundred yards off. Before catching sight of the brutes they had been eager for the sport; but the nearer they approached their game the more did their stock of valor decrease; so much so, that when they got well within shot, and saw an old buffalo turn his head in their direction, prick up his ears, and assume a very inquiring attitude, one of these hunters discovered that he had not got the right boots on for hunting. His companions most generously offered to escort him back to the Station and assist him in making the necessary alterations. They started to walk back, but with every step the matter appeared more urgent. They broke from a jog-trot into a regular racing pace. Arrived at the Station, breath recovered, and boots found, it was decided not to renew the chase, as the delay caused by this unfortunate oversight had put them completely out of the vein for shooting!

Formerly, Ibaka was the most powerful chief of Bolobo district. His name was mentioned by the natives of the surrounding villages with a great deal of reverential awe. But his village had become disunited; each of his sons was at enmity with him, and Manga, Gatula, Lingenji, Nkoé, Ngai Utsaka, the chiefs of the neighboring territory, being keen traders, had

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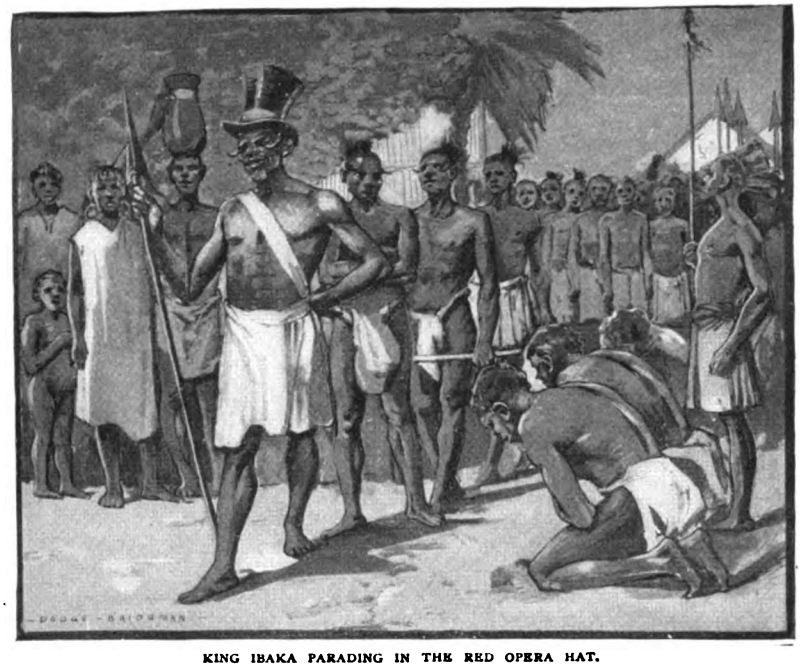
obtained numbers of fighting men, and Ibaka's word, which at one time commanded instant obedience, was now but little regarded. His title of chief of Bolobo was of small value; he had lost all influence. During my stay at Bolobo many a time he applied to us for assistance against his neighbors, and on several occasions he arrived at our gates in full flight, chased by his own sons, armed with heavy sticks, who sought by this method of persuasion, to make their father agree to an immediate and complete division of the little wealth he still possessed, or to gain his consent to any other extortionate demand that might have suggested itself to their inventive minds.

Poor old Ibaka was a well-meaning fellow, and was very favorably disposed toward the white men. He was, indeed, anxious to be on a friendly footing with his white neighbors, but the other villagers were jealous of him, and talked him into some trifling but irritating acts of arrogance toward the Station, which resulted, a few months before my arrival, in a little war between Ibaka and Liebrechts, who was in command of the Station. As a punishment for his aggressiveness, Ibaka's town was burned to the ground.

There is an institution among these people which cannot be more correctly described than by terming it the "Order of the Tall Hat." There is in each district a chief who has proved by his warlike success that he, of all the chiefs, is the most powerful. A public acknowledgment is made of this fact, and the elected individual is carried around on men's shoulders through the different villages, the bearers proclaiming to all that he is the Mokunjé Monéné (Big Chief), and that in future all tribal disputes are to be submitted to his judgment. Upon his return to the village, amidst dancing and singing and general feasting and joy, the Fetishman, or charm doctor, places on the chief's head a tall hat, resembling the "stovepipe" of civilized countries, but which is built with a brim at the crown, and not at the base. This hat is hereafter worn on all great occasions, and the wearer retains it until his death, when a new candidate is elected. In



KING IBAKA PARADING IN THE RED OPERA HAT.

times gone by Ibaka had received the honor of election to this proud order, but, unfortunately, during the trouble with Liebrechts the towering emblem of peculiar distinction was burned. A sympathizing white man, traveling through the country, heard of the old chief's hatless condition, and presented him with a red opera-hat of exaggerated construction, which had probably in years past formed a prominent feature in a pantomime or burlesque, or had been used with great effect by some comic singer or wandering minstrel.

The possession of this truly wonderful creation of the theatrical costumer made Ibaka a proud and happy man. His delight in his new decoration would have been unalloyed were it not for a haunting fear that some one might steal it. He kept it, when not in use, in our Sta-

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tion house, and called for it only on state occasions and big public drinking-bouts. I insisted on his continual care of this valuable acquisition, and would place it on the side of his head for him, and impress upon him the necessity of wearing it in that position, as we white men were very particular about such details. Old Ibaka was intensely superstitious, and was constantly with the Fetishman, who was kept busy manufacturing new charms to protect him against imaginary evils. The poor old chief was easily gulled, and would accept from anybody anything that had the semblance of a charm.

One day Ibaka arrived back from some prolonged native festival. The old fellow bore evidence of having taken more than his share of the strong wine. He had worn the red opera-hat on this occasion, and he now brought it to the Station to see it returned to its place of safe-keeping. Upon closing it up I noticed a mysterious little package, and was informed that it was a *monkanda monganga* (fetish letter). It was, in fact, a Mohammedan prayer, given to him by one of our boat's crew, as a safeguard against all forms of death. It struck me that a red opera-hat with a Mohammedan prayer pinned in it was, indeed, a strange "find" in the wilds of Central Africa.

When I was a baby
exceedingly young,
I made up a number
of very fine jokes;
And I said, "If I had
but the use of my tongue.
What fun it would be
to enlighten the folks!"
But now I'm a man and exceedingly old;
I know how to talk, and would gladly speak out,
But things go so wrong and the world is so cold,
I cannot recall what my jokes were about!
My Lost Jokes
Valentine Adams

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